

the energy crisis in the 1970s, during the Persian Gulf War, or during our current energy crisis, every American has felt the sting of our dependency on foreign oil. And I might add, Mr. President, that our dependency on foreign oil has steadily increased to the point where we now depend on foreign sources for more than 57 percent of our oil. Last month alone, it was over 60 percent. When enacted, the CLEAR Act will play a key role in helping our nation improve its energy security by increasing the diversity of our fuel options and decreasing our need for gasoline. Our nation's energy strategy will not be complete without an incentive to increase the use of alternative fuels and advanced car technologies.

Historically, consumers have faced three basic obstacles to accepting the use of alternative fuels and advanced technologies. These are the cost of the vehicles, the cost of alternative fuel, and the lack of an adequate infrastructure of alternative fueling stations. The CLEAR Act would lower all three of these barriers.

First, we provide a tax credit of 50 cents per gasoline-gallon equivalent for the purchase of alternative fuel at retail. To give customers better access to alternative fuel, we extend an existing deduction for the capital costs of installing alternative fueling stations. We also provide a 50 percent credit for the installation costs of retail and residential refueling stations.

Finally, we provide tax credits to consumers to purchase alternative fuel and advanced technology vehicles. To make certain that the tax benefit we provide translates into a corresponding benefit to the environment, we split the vehicle tax credit into two. One part provides a base tax credit for the purchase of vehicles dedicated to the use of alternative fuel or vehicles using advanced technologies. The other part offers a bonus credit based on the vehicle's efficiency and reduction in emissions. In this way, we are confident that the CLEAR Act will provide the biggest possible "bang for the buck" in terms of providing a social benefit to our citizens.

We all recognize that in the future we will not use gasoline fueled vehicles to the same extent we do today. Our legislation is an attempt to bring benefits of cleaner air to our citizens sooner, to free our cities from expensive EPA regulations, and to reduce our consumption of foreign oil. S. 760 enables us to tackle these problems with incentives, not mandates.

Our proposal is the most comprehensive legislation ever brought before Congress to promote the use of alternative fuel vehicles and advanced car technologies among consumers. We urge our colleagues to join with us in this forward-looking approach to cleaner air and increased energy independence.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Tuesday, April 24, 2001, the Federal debt stood at \$5,681,673,830,247.36. Five trillion, six hundred eighty-one billion, six hundred seventy-three million, eight hundred thirty thousand, two hundred forty-seven dollars and thirty-six cents.

One year ago, April 24, 2000, the Federal debt stood at \$5,711,906,000,000. Five trillion, seven hundred eleven billion, nine hundred six million.

Five years ago, April 24, 1996, the Federal debt stood at \$5,110,704,000,000. Five trillion, one hundred ten billion, seven hundred four million.

Ten years ago, April 24, 1991, the Federal debt stood at \$3,438,135,000,000. Three trillion, four hundred thirty-eight billion, one hundred thirty-five million.

Fifteen years ago, April 24, 1986, the Federal debt stood at \$1,959,555,000,000. One trillion, nine hundred fifty-nine billion, five hundred fifty-five million, which reflects a debt increase of more than \$3 trillion, \$3,722,118,830,247.36. Three trillion, seven hundred twenty-two billion, one hundred eighteen million, eight hundred thirty thousand, two hundred forty-seven dollars and thirty-six cents during the past 15 years.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

CONGRATULATING CENTRAL FALLS HIGH SCHOOL

• Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, this past weekend, twenty-two exceptional students from Central Falls High School in Rhode Island visited Washington to compete in the national finals of the "We The People . . . The Citizen And The Constitution" program, after finishing in first place in the Rhode Island competition. In fact, this is the fourth time that the Central Falls High School team has won the statewide competition!

For those of my colleagues who are not familiar with it, the "We The People . . . The Citizen And The Constitution" program is among the most extensive educational specifically to ensure that young people understand the history and philosophy of the Constitution and the Bill of rights. The three-day national competition simulates a congressional hearing in which students are given the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge while they evaluate, take, and defend positions on historical and contemporary constitutional issues.

Administered by the Center for Civic Education, the "We The People . . . The Citizen And The Constitution" program provide an excellent opportunity for students to gain an informed perspective on the significance of the U.S. Constitution and its place in our history. It is heartwarming to see young Rhode Islanders taking such an active and participatory interest in public affairs.

I am very proud of Gabriel Arias, Jorge Bolivar, Andrew Castillo, Karen Corrales, Johnathan DePina, Kinga Dobrzycki, Kayla England, Renee Fisher, Christina Garcia, Roseangel Gavidia, Karen Hurtado, Deborah Navarro, Jessica Pareja, Denisse Reyes, Erik Rua, Shirley Rua, Jesse Salazar, Janet Sanchez, Corey Stad, Monica Torres, Vladimir Uran, Sirabel Uran, for making it to the national finals. I congratulate this outstanding group of young men and women for their hard work and perseverance. Also, I want to applaud Jeff Schanck, a fine teacher who deserves so much credit for guiding the Central Falls High School team to the national finals.

Yesterday, I was pleased to visit with the students from Central Falls to offer my congratulations for what they have achieved. These students, with the guidance of Mr. Schanck, have learned much about the meaning of our nation and what countless men and women have fought and died to protect. No matter what the outcome of the contest, they have each earned the greatest prize of all: Knowledge.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Evans, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the presiding officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 11:14 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that pursuant to section 1238(b) of the Floyd D. Spence National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2001 (Public Law 106-398) and the order of the House of Wednesday, April 4, 2001, the Speaker on Thursday, April 5, 2001, appointed the following members on the part of the House of Representatives to the United States-China Security Review Commission: Mr. Stephen D. Bryen of Maryland, Ms. June Teufel Dryer of Florida, and Mr. James R. Lilley of Maryland.

The message also announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 428. An act concerning the participation of Taiwan in the World Health Organization.

The message further announced that the House disagrees to the amendment